



**i brought you
daffodils in a
pretty string,
but they won't**

lumaxies

i brought you daffodils in a pretty string, but they won't flower like they did last spring by lumaxies

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Summary:

richie tozier is a man of many words. ask anyone, and they'll tell you: richie doesn't know how to shut the fuck up. he's always running his mouth at inappropriate times, usually resulting in some kind of trouble for him and the rest of his friends- one time he got them all in-school suspensions because he was mouthing off to the prinicpal. from snarky comebacks, to 'your mom' jokes, richie tozier's trashmouth never seems to stop running.

but, richie tozier is also a man of many suppressed emotions. with parents who drink their money and their days away, and the several mental disorders that seem to take over his thoughts (no, eddie, he wil not medicate, he's fine!), he has a hard time expressing how he feels. he's never really talked about what's going on in his head before. his friends, especially bill and bev, try to get him to open up more, but richie still turns to eddie whenever he needs to be emotional. which makes his predicament a lot harder.

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but, richie tozier is also a man of many suppressed emotions. with parents who drink their money and their days away, and the several mental disorders that seem to take over his thoughts (no, eddie, he will not medicate, he's fine!), he has a hard time expressing how he feels. he's never really talked about what's going on in his head before. his friends, especially bill and bev, try to get him to open up more, but richie still turns to eddie whenever he needs to be emotional. which makes his predicament a lot harder.

it's his sophomore year of high school, he just turned sixteen, and he's fallen in love with his best friend. it's a sticky situation, but he doesn't really understand how he was just expected to not fall in love with eddie kaspbrak. with dark curls, and a tiny frame, eddie has always been by richie's side. the intense emotional connection they had, despite their constant banter, paired with the fact that eddie grew up extremely well, spelled trouble for richie, and his heart.

sure, they're living in 2017, and being gay is a lot more accepted than it was in 1980, but that doesn't mean that all the oppression and discrimination that came with being gay just disappeared. in his small town of derry, hate crimes were still a frequent occurrence, and the threat of henry bowers and his gang constantly loomed over richie's head like a dark cloud. at risk of sounding like a sap, he admitted to himself that he would rather die than let eddie fall victim to whatever might happen to a gay kid on the streets of derry.

"hey, richie," bev placed her lunch tray beside him, and rested a hand on his shoulder. "you good?"

“sure,” he swallowed and nodded, trying to play off the intense self-reflection that just happened as nothing. “just thinking about my night with eddie’s mom.” he nudged the boy on his other side, who rolled his eyes, irritated.

“beep beep, richie.” eddie said through a forkful of salad, and richie grinned, wrapping an arm around him.

“sorry, eddie spaghetti. i know me talking about the hots your mom has for me makes you jealous.”

eddie scoffed. “you wish, trashmouth. shut up and eat your pizza.”

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eventually, the pining is too much to bottle up, and richie is forced to figure out another solution. admitting to eddie that there was a heat that pooled in his stomach every time he so much as looked in richie’s direction, or that he often had extended daydreams about the way eddie’s lips would feel, was less than desirable. coming out to bill or stan somehow seemed even less appealing. his only option, it seemed, was bev.

he bums a cigarette off her after third period on a friday, and they sit on the hood of richie’s beat up truck, richie silent, as bev looks at him expectantly.

“i’m bisexual,” he says finally, and bev smiles softly. “and i’ve got a crush. on a boy.”

bev nods. “you’re growing up, trashmouth,” she says fondly, reaching for his hand. “look at you.”

the gesture and her words fill him with relief, and he squeezes her hand. he’s ready.

“bev?” she hums in acknowledgement, and richie swallows. “it’s eddie.”

bev inhales too sharply on the drag she takes, and she starts hacking. richie smacks her on the back a few times when she sits up, trying to help clear her airway.

“for real?” she asks after she stops coughing, looking at richie with wide eyes.

“uh, yeah?” richie is blushing now, and bev throws her arms around him in a tight hug.

“richie, that’s great!”

“except for the fact that he doesn’t like me.” richie avoids her eyes, and bev frowns.

“you don’t know that!” she exclaims.

“no, but i don’t want to risk it either way.” richie explains, fidgeting. “what if he rejects me? what if he doesn’t feel the same way, and then i tell him, and everything is different? he’s my best friend, bev, i can’t lose him.”

bev rests her head on his shoulder, and takes another drag. richie rests his head on hers, and bev reaches for his hand again. “if you don’t tell him soon, i’m going to kick your ass.” she tells him, no hint of a joke in her tone. “you deserve to be happy, richie. even if you are a fucktard.”

“shut the fuck up, molly ringwald. you weren’t even that good in sixteen candles.”

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the thing that you have to understand about richie tozier is that, even though he has a naturally accepting personality, and his political views are extremely liberal, all of the morals he has came from the internet. his family, as much as they’ve done for him, have always been on the conservative side of things- his dad’s italian heritage makes for a family of extreme catholics, and his mom’s upbringing in the mormon church made for an even bigger batch of people to fight his way through. let him be one of many to say that growing up in a religious household when you like boys is not a spectacular experience.

that being said, despite being a free spirit, richie has dealt with a lot of homophobia on both sides of his family. he remembers the

discussions of pride parades and marriage equality that took place every thanksgiving, how cruel his aunts and uncle were as they spit slurs across the table, mutters of distaste lodged in his brain since he could walk. so, as much as he would love to be completely comfortable in who he is, there's always going to be a little voice in the back of his head telling him that he's a vile sinner every time he thinks of eddie.

richie wants to be okay. he wants to be able to tell eddie that he loves him, and be able to accept the outcome, no matter the response. he wants to be able to walk down the hallways of derry high, or to the aladdin, or home from dates with a boy that he loves, and hold his hand. he wants to kiss a fucking boy, goddammit, but there's a devil on his shoulder that's telling him that he can't, and he doesn't know how to make it go away without potentially ruining everything.

so he does the only thing he knows will help.

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there's a slow song that's playing over the speaker as he and eddie lie on the floor of eddie's bedroom, something acoustic eddie put on, that richie's never heard. the pit in his stomach is growing deeper and deeper.

"hey, eds?"

"don't call me that. what?" eddie turns to face him, but richie stares straight up at the ceiling, fingers tapping against his leg out of anxiety.

"do you think it's okay to be gay?"

eddie startles, and moves to rest on his elbows, elevating him slightly. "why the fuck would you ask me that?"

"jus' wonderin'," richie mumbles, placing a hand over his eyes, trying to stop the tears from falling. "i'm sorry."

"no, richie, seriously. what the fuck?"

“no need to get so defensive, eds, i’m not gonna leave your mom! you can still call me daddy.”

eddie shoves his shoulder, and flops back down on his back, eyes still on richie. “beep beep, trashmouth. this is serious.”

richie sighs. “if i tell you something, do you promise not to get mad?”

“richie,” eddie says his name, and it’s like fireworks exploding, or angels singing. the weight of it holds a million words, and richie can’t keep it in anymore. “you can tell me anything.”

it’s like a dam breaking, the words spilling out of his mouth, and he almost wishes he were somewhere that wasn’t eddie’s tiny bedroom, with his mom downstairs, in a shithole town, with phony ass people that were going to beat his ass the second they found this out. but he knows there’s nowhere else he would rather be, either, than here, in this moment, on eddie’s immaculately clean carpet, his best friend and the love of his life looking at him like he’s the only thing in the world, the biggest secret he’s ever kept falling out of his mouth.

“i love you.” richie breathes.

“what?”

“i love you,” he repeats, turning to look at eddie at last. his eyes are wide, but he doesn’t seem mad. that’s a good sign. “i love you in a really, really big ‘pretend to like your taste in music, let you eat the last piece of cheesecake, hold a radio over my head outside your window’, unfortunate way that makes me hate you, love you.”

“richie...”

“eddie.” richie presses his forehead to eddie’s, who pulls away.

“richie, we can’t.” eddie pushes off the floor, and moves to open his window. “you should go.”

richie nods, sweeps up his backpack, and shimmies down the drainpipe to the ground, the soft music still playing on eddie’s speaker.

goodbye, my luckless romance, my back is turned on you. should have known you'd bring me heartache, almost lovers always do.

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he heads straight to bev's, and she holds him while he cries.

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the next day he's back to being trashmouth tozier, talking back and making dirty jokes, the smile never leaving his face. he's good at pretending that nothing is wrong- it took years of practice, and he's perfected the art of pretending that his heart isn't breaking as he speaks.

if anyone notices him cling to bev a little more, or catches on to the fact that he's avoiding eddie like the plague, they don't say anything. he likes it that way.

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it's thursday when eddie finally talks to him again. he's walking to sixth period, when a hand grabs his jacket sleeve and yanks him into an unused classroom.

"what the fuck, dude?"

and then he's being pulled into a bruising kiss, warm and soft hands cupping his face, and pulling him close. richie melts into the touch, before he realizes he has no idea what the fuck is going on, and pulls away.

"richie," his name is breathed into the darkness, and richie nearly keels over. "i'm sorry."

richie shakes his head. "you don't need to be sorry, eddie."

"i love you," eddie blurts, and richie, for once, is completely silent. "i love you in a really big 'let you pick the movie on date night, risk several diseases so i can shove my tongue in your mouth, put up with

all your stupid jokes, run through an airport to make sure you don't get away from me' horrendous way that makes me despise you, love you. richie."

this time it's richie that's cupping his face, pulling him into a gentle kiss, and running his thumb across his cheeks. they pull away after a few moments, and richie rests his forehead on eddie's, breathing heavily.

"why did you-?"

"i was scared," eddie cuts him off. "all these years i've been waiting around for you to get off your ass and notice me, and just when i decide to get over you, you choose to spill your guts? it seemed to good to be true."

richie shook his head. "never. it's you, eddie, it's always been you."

"i'd really like you to kiss me again." eddie whispers against his lips, his arms around his neck.

"okay."